fical year 2001-2002 *i.e.* from April 2001 to June 2001, Railways have carried 117.13 million tonnes of freight traffic as compared to 116.61 million tonnes during the same period of last year.

(d) Some of the measures initiated by the Railways to improve the railways freight include:

Bulk Traffic:

Special care to premier customers, freight rebate on incremental traffic, Station-to-Station rates, setting up of rail terminal by private entrepreneurs, setting up of warehousing facility near rail terminals, special lumpsum rates for movement in merry-go-round circuit over short stretches, launching the Freight Operations Information System (FOIS) to provide real-time information to customers, running timetabled freight trains, etc.

Non-Bulk Traffic:

Attention to Multimodal traffic through Container Corporation of India Ltd. (CONCOR), Leasing out Brake Vans in passenger trains, leasing out Parcel Vans, introduction of Chartered Parcel Express etc.

Rail Reservation

†*287. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to entrust rail reservation work to other persons;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any steps in this regard;

(c) the main reasons to entrust reservation work to others;

(d) whether Government have also formulated any scheme to take co-operation of private sector institutions for the sale of rail tickets; if

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

so, the outline of the scheme, stating whether responsibility for implementation of the scheme has already been given to some institutions; and

(e) the names of such institutions and the basis of their selection?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) to (e) The distribution of tickets through private parties is not a new phenomena for Indian Railways. Issue of tickets by Out Agents, City Booking Agents, Rail Tourist Agents, Halt Agents, etc. exists since long. In addition, Rail Travellers' Service Agents (RTSAs) are appointed under Rail Travellers' Service Agents Rules, 1985 (made under direction of the Supreme Court) who purchase the tickets from Railway counters on behalf of passengers after collecting prescribed service charges. In order to facilitate rail reservation for common man it was proposed in the Railway Budget for the financial year 1999-2000 to provide Passenger Reservation System (PRS) terminals on experimental basis to travel agents authorised under under the Rail Tourist Agents Scheme and Rail Travellers Services Agents Scheme of the Railways at their cost and with suitable safeguards.

In addition, to proliferate retail railways ticketing and for improvement in customer service, it is also proposed to issue reserved tickets on Internet through authorised service providers. At present Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Railways has been assigned a pilot project to facilitate railway ticketing in Delhi area through suitable service providers. Only expression of interests have been called for the IRCTC. The criteria for selection will be the travel related experience, availability of IT and Telecom infrastructure etc.

Pollutants Level in Delhi

*288. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the quantity of RSPM, Nitrogen Dioxide and Sulphur in the atmosphere over Delhi has been over the safe level for the last many days;